AL-ISRĀ WA-AL-MI'RĀJ

The Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet

ﷺ

Shaykh Aḥmad Shākir

Al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj

(The Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet ﷺ)

Shaykh Aḥmad Shākir

Translated by Rāhā ibn Donald Batts

Allāh has informed us in His Book,

﴿ سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴾

Glorified [and Exalted] be He [Allāh] Who took His Slave [Muḥammad (ﷺ)] for a journey by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām [at Makkah] to the farthest mosque [in Jerusalem], the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed, in order that We might show him [Muḥammad (ﷺ)] Our Āyāt. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer. [Sūrah al-Isrāʾ 17:1]

The Night Journey and Ascension "are two incidents from the greatest incidents in the noble history of Muḥammad (ﷺ)." However, the mode of these incidents has been debated over the years: Did they occur in a dream? Was his (ﷺ) soul removed and taken to the heavens while his body remained on earth? Or did he ascend in his whole form (body and soul)? Shaykh Aḥmad Shākir puts this issue to rest with a thorough review and explanation of the ahādīth which have been transmitted regarding al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj; the different transmissions and the errors in them; and a refutation of those who discount these miraculous occurrences as unscientific and therefore untrue.

AL·ISRĀ' WA·AL·MI'RĀJ

The Night Journey and Ascension of the Prophet

ﷺ

Shaykh Aḥmad Shākir

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Consonants

ء	ʾ	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	ʿ	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	gh	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y

Vowels

Short	ـَ	a	ـِ	i	ـُ	u
Long	ـَا	ā	ـِي	ī	ـُو	ū
Diphthongs	ـَوْ	aw	ـَيْ	ay		

Introduction

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most-Gracious, the Ever-Merciful

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

Glorified [and Exalted] be He [Allāh] Who took His Slave [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] for a journey by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām [at Makkah] to the farthest mosque [in Jerusalem], the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed, in order that We might show him [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] Our Āyāt. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

[Sūrah al-Isrāʾ, 17:1]

O people, we are gathered on this blessed night to commemorate a sign from the greatest signs of prophethood with which Allāh specified His Slave, Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam), over the rest of the prophets; upon them be prayers and peace. He commanded him (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) to lead them (i.e., the rest of the prophets) in prayer in Bayt al-Maqdis, the location of the first prophethood. Allāh commanded them to follow the prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) in honour of his status and as a means of esteem. Due to this, he (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) said:

«أنا سيد ولد آدم يوم القيامة ولا فخر وبيدي لواء الحمد ولا فخر وما من نبي يومئذ آدم فمن سواه إلا تحت لوائي.»

"I am the leader of the children of Ādam, and I am not boasting. In my hand is the flag of praise, and I am not boasting. There is no prophet on that day, neither

Ādam nor anyone besides him, except that he will be beneath my flag."[1]

This is an indication that he was sent to mankind in general, as Allāh the Exalted has said in His Noble Book:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

And We have not sent you [O Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all mankind, but most of men know not.

[Sūrah al-Sabāʾ, 34:28]

[He (Allāh) also did so] to teach their nations and followers to have faith in him [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] and to believe in him and follow him, just as their leading prophets followed him. And their leadership falls under his leadership on the Day of Standing. For he is the Imām of Imams and he is the greatest Imām. So he who believes in him, from the followers of the prophets, has believed in (all of) them, and he who does not believe in him then he has not believed in a single one of them. What attests to this is the statement of Allāh, the Exalted:

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُم مِّن كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُم مِّنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

And [remember] when Allāh took the covenant of the prophets, saying: "Take whatever I gave you from the Book and ḥikmah [understanding of the Laws of Allāh, etc.], and afterwards there will come to you a messenger [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] confirming what is with you; you must, then, believe in him and help him." Allāh said: "Do you agree [to it] and will you

[1] Reported by *al-Tirmidhī*, nos. 3137 and 3615 and *Ibn Mājah*, no. 4308, from the Ḥadīth of Abu Saᶜīd al-Khudrī (raḍi Allāhu ᶜanhu). Al-Albānī graded it ṣaḥīḥ in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmiᶜ*, no. 1468.

take up My Covenant [which I conclude with you]?" They said: "We agree." He said: "Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses [for this]."

[Sūrah Āli ʿImrān, 3:81]

And the statement of the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) when ʿUmar came to him with a book which he got from some of the people of the Book, and had read; [the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said]:

«والذي نفسي بيده لو كان موسى حيا ما وسعه إلا أن يتبعني.»

"By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, if Mūsá was alive, he would have no choice except to follow me."[2]

[2] Reported by *Aḥmad*, no. 14736 and *al-Dārimī*, no. 435, from the Ḥadīth of Jābir ibn ʿAbdillāh, may Allāh be pleased with them both. Al-Albānī graded it ḥasan in *ʾIrwāʾ al-Ghalīl*, no. 1589.

Al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Are Two of the Most Significant Incidents in the Noble History of Muḥammad

O people, the Night Journey and the Ascension are two incidents from the greatest incidents in the noble history of Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam), and I have been invited to speak to you regarding them. I do not see myself as having the expertise for this great undertaking; however, I trust that you will overlook my shortcomings and deficiencies out of pardon and kindness.

Speaking regarding their status revolves around various points of speech. I am certain that I am incapable of encompassing and giving them justice. It is sufficient for me to restrict my speech to the aspect regarding that which I deem to have knowledge of. What I believe that I have knowledge of is a type of specialty: it is researching the affirmation of the Night Journey and the Ascension from the historical perspective. By this, I mean the Ḥadīth-based perspective. Hence, the ascription of any statement or action to the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) is a field of study which is delegated to the scholar of Ḥadīth. He is the one who is referred to in affirming or negating it once the fields of study are determined, as well as the specialities of each class of scholars and what they are proficient in from branches of knowledge.

The principles of validating historical events that the scholars of this field—the field of Ḥadīth—adhere to are the most correct; they are the loftiest and the most precise. Many people turn away from them (the principles) and delve into them without knowledge or evidence. Rather, we find some of the researchers resorting, in affirming the Aḥādīth or negating them, to their opinions and desires. So whatever they see from that which is ascribed to the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) that coincides with their opinion, then it is an authentic Ḥadīth according to them, even if it is a fabricated lie. And whatever they see

from affirmed authentic Aḥādīth, but it opposes what their desires support, then it is a weak Ḥadīth or a lie, even if its chain of narration is from the strongest and most authentic of chains according to those who are cognizant of them. And perhaps they have never read an isnād (chain) in their entire lives, be it sound or weak. And they know nothing whatsoever regarding what the scholars of Ḥadīth have exerted in researching, verifying, and investigating the conditions of the narrations and the wordings of the Ḥadīth as well as their meanings, and what they have written regarding this topic, from large books and encyclopedic compilations, beginning from the middle of the second century after the Hijrah up to the beginning of the tenth century.

The Concern of the Muslims for Preserving the Chains of Their Legislation from the Book and the Sunnah the Way No Nation before Them Has

O people, the Muslims have been charged with preserving the chains of their legislation from the Book and the Sunnah, in a manner which no nation before them has been charged. So they have preserved the Qurʾān, and they have narrated it from the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) in a mutawātir fashion (i.e., it has been successively narrated)—verse for verse, word for word, and letter for letter. It has been preserved within the breasts and affirmed in the texts of the mushafs, to the point that they (the Muslims) narrated the (various) manners of pronunciation within the dialects of the tribes. They narrated the methods of illustrating it on the pages, and they wrote books regarding this (science). If I were to speak to you regarding some of these sciences you would be amazed, and perhaps some of you are more knowledgeable regarding them than I am.

The Muslims also preserved, from their Prophet, all of his statements, actions and situations. He (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) was a conveyor from his Lord and a clarifier of His legislation, and he was commanded to establish His religion. All of his statements and actions were a clarifier for the Qurʾān. He was the infallible messenger and the excellent example. Listen to the statement of Allāh the Exalted, in describing him:

وَكَذَّبُوا۟ وَٱتَّبَعُوٓا۟ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ مُّسْتَقِرٌّ ﴿٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَهُم مِّنَ ٱلْأَنۢبَآءِ مَا فِيهِ مُزْدَجَرٌ ﴿٤﴾

They belied [the Verses of Allāh, this Qurʾān], and followed their own lusts. And every matter will be settled [according to the kind of deeds (for the doer of good deeds, his deeds will take him to Paradise, and similarly, evil deeds will take their doers to Hell)]. And indeed there has come to them news [in this Qurʾān] wherein there is [enough warning] to check [them from evil].

[Sūrah al-Najm, 54:3-4]

And His statement:

وَأَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ٱلذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

And We have also sent down unto you [O Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] the reminder and the advice [the Qurʾān], that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought.

[Sūrah al-Naḥl, 16:44]

Also, His statement:

لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِى رَسُولِ ٱللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

Indeed in the Messenger of Allāh [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] you have a good example.

[Sūrah al-Aḥzāb, 33:21]

ᶜAbdullāh ibn ᶜAmr ibn al-ᶜĀs used to write everything he heard from the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam), and the Quraysh used to try to prohibit him from doing so. He mentioned that to the Messenger (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) who said:

اكتب فوالذي نفسي بيده ما يخرج مني إلا حق

"Write; for by He in Whose Hand is my soul, nothing emanates from me except the truth."[1]

So the Muslims understood from all of this that it was obligatory upon them to preserve everything from their messenger and they did. They discharged the trust in the proper manner, and they narrated the Aḥādīth from him. Some of them are mutawātir (successively narrated), either in wording and meaning or in meaning alone. Some of them are famous, and some of them have chains of narration which are ṣaḥīḥ and established. These are called, based upon the principles of the (legislative) usage: Ḥadīth ṣaḥīḥ and Ḥadīth ḥasan. They (i.e., the Muslims) would not use as a proof in their religion other than these types (of Aḥādīth) concerning which none (seeks to) contradict except an arrogant, obstinate person.

The Imām, al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Muḥammad ibn Ḥazm clarified these types in the book *Al-Milal wa-al-Niḥal*, and he said concerning the last type, which, according to the scholars of Ḥadīth terminology, is called al-Āḥād (الآحاد):

It is that which a trustworthy person narrated from another trustworthy person until it reaches the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam). Each person informs of the name and lineage of the person who informed him and the condition of each one of them is well-known, as is their trustworthiness, their time frame, and their place. The majority of that which has come in this fashion has been transmitted widely, either up to the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) by way of a group of the Companions (radī Allāhu ᶜanhum), or up to a Companion or up to a Tābiᶜ, or up to an Imam who took from the Tābiᶜ. He who is knowledgeable of this field knows that. And all the praise is for Allāh, the Lord of all that exists."

Allāh the Exalted has specified the Muslims with this transmission (i.e., transmission of Aḥādīth) over all of the people of the (various) religions. He has

[1] Reported by *Abū Dāwūd* (no. 3646) *Aḥmad* (no. 6474) and *Al-Dārimī* (no. 484), and Al-Albānī graded it ṣaḥīḥ in *Al-Silsilah Al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 1532).

made it to remain amongst them, constantly being revived over the course of four hundred and fifty years, in the east and the west, the south and the north. A (large) number of people—whom none knows their number except their Creator—would travel to far recesses (seeking the narrations). They bore the burden of classifying them (i.e., as authentic or unauthentic). Allāh the Exalted entrusted its preservation to them, and all the praise is for Allāh, the Lord of all that exists. They did not overlook a mistake in wording, or anything greater than that from the transmission if it occurred from one of them (i.e., the Muslims). So it is not possible for an evil-doer to insert a fabricated word into it (the Ḥadīth). And the thanks are for Allāh the Exalted.

A Glimpse at the Tremendous Efforts Exerted by Our Pious Predecessors to Preserve the Narrations of Their Prophet

O people, this is a glimpse at the tremendous efforts which our pious predecessors (radī Allāhu ᶜanhum) exerted to preserve the narrations of their Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam), in obedience to what he commanded his Companions in the farewell pilgrimage:

«ألا فليبلغ الشاهب الغائب فرب مبلغ أوعى من سامع.»

"Let the witness convey to the one who is absent. For perhaps the one to whom it is conveyed has more comprehension than the one who heard it."[2]

Is it therefore, after this, permissible for everyone who raises his head and is impressed with his own intellect and pleased with himself, to say: "This Ḥadīth is authentic and that Ḥadīth is not authentic? Does he not know that when he rejects an authentic Ḥadīth, either by negating its authenticity or by misinterpreting it, that he is accusing men who were trustworthy, firm scholars and memorizers, of lying or being ignorant and not knowing anything about their reports and their conditions? He has accused them in their religion, their trustworthiness and their

[2] Reported by *al-Bukhārī* (no. 1741) and *Muslim* (no. 1679) from the Ḥadīth of Abū Bakrah (raḍī Allāhu ᶜanhu).

truthfulness. And when he is pleased with a fabricated Ḥadīth, he claims that it is ṣaḥīḥ and established. Thus, he shares—due to his slanders and lies—in the statement:

«من حدث عني بحديث وهو يرى أنه كذب فهو أحد الكذّابين.»

"He who narrates from me a Ḥadīth which is determined to be a lie then he is from the liars."[3]

[3] Reported by *Muslim* in the Introduction (pg. 7), *al-Tirmidhī* (no. 2662) and *Ibn Mājah* (no. 38). Al-Albānī graded it ṣaḥīḥ in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmiᶜ* (6199).

2 The Concern of the Muslims for Preserving the Chains of Their Legislation from the Book and the Sunnah the Way No Nation before Them Has

The People Dare Play Around with the Noble Sunnah Out Of Enmity and Transgression

O people, I hope that you will excuse me for speaking at length regarding this. For it is along the lines of that which we are presenting from affirmation of the Ḥadīth regarding al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj. This is also because the ignorant from the people constantly play around with the noble Sunnah out of enmity and transgression.

They did not suffice with belying the trustworthy narrators and firm Imams. Rather, they increased in enmity and transgression and ventured into belying some of the Companions of Allāh's Messenger (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) while they (i.e., the Companions) are his emissaries to those after them. They were entrusted with his (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) religion and his legislation. They are those whom Allāh has praised in the Qurʾān with what He has not praised other companions of other prophets. They were the forerunners who were near [to Allāh and His Messenger (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)]. May Allāh be pleased with them and they with Him.

3 The People Dare Play Around with the Noble Sunnah Out Of Enmity and Transgression

The Ḥadīth of al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Is from the Authentic and Established Aḥādīth

O people, the Ḥadīth regarding al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj is from the authentically established Aḥādīth. It has come via many mutawātir (successively narrated) narrations—from them are those which are long, and from them are those which are summarized. It has various wordings, and all of them together indicate the authenticity of this occurrence and its historical affirmation, by way of what the Scholars refer to as al-tawātur al-maʿnawī (figurative tawātur). It has come from the Ḥadīth of Anas ibn Mālik and other than him from the Companions.

Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr, transmitted in his *Tafsīr* (5/243) from al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Khattāb ʿUmar ibn Diḥyah that he (ʿUmar ibn Diḥyah) mentioned the Ḥadīth of Anas, then said:

> The narrations of the Ḥadīth of al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj have been successively narrated from ʿUmar ibn al-Khattāb; ʿAlī, Ibn Masʿūd; Abū Dharr; Mālik ibn Ṣaʿṣaʿah; Abū Hurayrah; Abū Saʿīd; Ibn ʿAbbās; Shaddād ibn Aws; Ubay ibn Kaʿb; ʿAbd al-Rahmān ibn Qarṭ; Abū Hayyah; Abū Laylá al-Ansārī; ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr; Jābir; Hudhayfah; Buraydah; Abū Ayyūb; Abū Umāmah; Samurah ibn Jundub; Abū al-Hamrāʾ; Ṣuhayb al-Rūmī; Umm Hāniʾa; ʿĀʾishah and Asmāʾ, the two daughters of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq; may Allāh be pleased with them all.

From them there are those who have cited it at length, and from them are those who summarized it to what is found within the musnads. Although the narration of some of them do not meet the conditions which would make them ṣaḥīḥ, the Muslims are in unanimous agreement regarding the Ḥadīth of al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj, and the heretics and deviants reject it.

4 The Ḥadīth of al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Is from the Authentic and Established Aḥādīth

يُرِيدُونَ لِيُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ مُتِمُّ نُورِهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

They intend to put out the Light of Allāh [i.e., the religion of Islām, this Qurʿān, and Prophet Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)] with their mouths. But Allāh will complete His Light even though the disbelievers hate [it].

[Sūrah al-Saff, 61:8]

So here are twenty-six Companions who have narrated the Ḥadīth of al-Isrāʾ. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr compiled the majority of their narrations, along with their chains in his *Tafsīr* (5/197-243), with their locations within the six authentic books of Ḥadīth and other than them. I will narrate for you some of the authentic narrations amongst them:

Some of the Narrations

It is narrated to us with a ṣaḥīḥ chain, from the Imam of the Ḥadīth scholars, Abū ʿAbdullāh Ahmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Hanbal, in his *Musnad*[1] that he said:

> Ḥasan ibn Mūsá narrated to us, saying: Ḥammād ibn Salamah narrated to us, saying: Thābit al-Bunānī narrated to us from Anas ibn Mālik that the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said:
>
> **أتيت بالبراق وهو دابة أبيض فوق الحمار ودون البغل يضع حافره عند منتهى طرفه فركبته فسار بي حتى أتيت بيت المقدس فربطت الدابة بالحلقة التي يربط فيها الأنبياء ثم دخلت فصليت فيه ركعتين ثم خرجت فجاءني جبريل عليه السلام بإناء من خمر وإناء من لبن فاخترت اللبن قال جبريل أصبت الفطرة ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء الدنيا فاستفتح جبريل فقيل ومن أنت قال جبريل قيل ومن معك قال محمد فقيل وقد أرسل إليه قال قد أرسل إليه ففتح لنا فإذا أنا بآدم فرحب ودعا لي بخير ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء الثانية فاستفتح جبريل فقيل ومن أنت قال جبريل فقيل ومن معك قال محمد فقيل وقد أرسل إليه قال قد أرسل إليه قال ففتح لنا فإذا أنا بابني الخالة يحيى وعيسى فرحبا ودعوا لي بخير ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء الثالثة فاستفتح**

[1] Reported by *Aḥmad* (no. 12096). Al-Albānī graded it *ṣaḥīḥ* in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmiʿ* (no. 127).

جبريل فقيل من أنت قال جبريل فقيل ومن معك قال محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فقيل وقد أرسل إليه قال وقد أرسل إليه ففتح لنا فإذا أنا بيوسف عليه السلام وإذا هو قد أعطي شطر الحسن فرحب ودعا لي بخير ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء الرابعة فاستفتح جبريل فقيل من أنت قال جبريل قيل ومن معك قال محمد فقيل قد أرسل إليه قال قد أرسل إليه ففتح الباب فإذا أنا بإدريس فرحب بي ودعا لي بخير ثم قال يقول الله عز وجل ورفعناه مكانا عليا ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء الخامسة فاستفتح جبريل فقيل من أنت قال جبريل فقيل ومن معك قال محمد فقيل قد بعث إليه قال قد بعث إليه ففتح لنا فإذا أنا بهارون فرحب ودعا لي بخير ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء السادسة فاستفتح جبريل فقيل من أنت قال جبريل قيل ومن معك قال محمد فقيل وقد بعث إليه قال قد بعث إليه ففتح لنا فإذا أنا بموسى عليه السلام فرحب ودعا لي بخير ثم عرج بنا إلى السماء السابعة فاستفتح جبريل فقيل من أنت قال جبريل قيل ومن معك قال محمد قيل وقد بعث إليه قال قد بعث إليه ففتح لنا فإذا أنا بإبراهيم صلى الله عليه وسلم وإذا هو مستند إلى البيت المعمور وإذا هو يدخله كل يوم سبعون ألف ملك لا يعودون إليه ثم ذهب بي إلى سدرة المنتهى وإذا ورقها كآذان الفيلة وإذا ثمرها كالقلال فلما غشيها من أمر الله ما غشيها تغيرت فما أحد من خلق الله يستطيع أن يصفها من حسنها قال فأوحى الله عز وجل إلي ما أوحى وفرض علي في كل يوم وليلة خمسين صلاة فنزلت حتى انتهيت إلى موسى فقال ما فرض ربك على أمتك قال قلت خمسين صلاة في كل يوم وليلة قال ارجع إلى ربك فاسأله التخفيف فإن أمتك لا تطيق ذلك وإني قد بلوت بني إسرائيل وخبرتهم قال فرجعت إلى ربي عز وجل فقلت أي رب خفف عن أمتي فحط عني خمسا فرجعت إلى موسى فقال ما فعلت قلت حط عني خمسا قال إن أمتك لا تطيق ذلك فارجع إلى ربك فاسأله التخفيف لأمتك قال فلم أزل أرجع بين ربي وبين موسى ويحط عني خمسا خمسا حتى قال يا محمد هي خمس صلوات في كل يوم وليلة بكل صلاة عشر فتلك خمسون صلاة ومن هم بحسنة فلم يعملها كتبت حسنة فإن عملها كتبت عشرا ومن هم بسيئة فلم يعملها لم تكتب شيئا فإن عملها كتبت سيئة واحدة فنزلت حتى انتهيت إلى موسى فأخبرته فقال ارجع إلى ربك فاسأله التخفيف لأمتك فإن أمتك لا تطيق ذاك فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لقد رجعت إلى ربي حتى لقد استحيت.

Al-Burāq was brought to me; it is an animal which is smaller than a mule and smaller than a donkey. It places its footstep as far as the eye can see. I rode it and it took me to Bayt al-Maqdis. I tethered the animal to the ring used by the prophets, then I entered and prayed two units

[of prayer]. Then I came out and Jibrīl, upon him be peace, came to me with a container of wine and a container of milk. I chose the container of milk, and Jibrīl said: 'You chose the fitrah.' Then we elevated to the lower heaven, and Jibrīl sought to enter. It was said: 'Who are you?' He said: 'Jibrīl.' It was said: 'And who is with you?' He said: 'Muḥammad.' It was said: 'Was he sent for?' He said: 'He was sent for.' So it was opened for us and behold, there was Ādam. He welcomed me and supplicated good for me.

Then we elevated to the second heaven, and Jibrīl sought to enter. It was said: 'Who are you?' He said: 'Jibrīl.' It was said: 'And who is with you?' He said: 'Muḥammad.' It was said: 'Was he sent for?' He said: 'He was sent for.' So it was opened for us, and behold, there were the two cousins; Yahyá and ʿĪsá. They welcomed me and supplicated good for me.

Then we elevated to the third heaven, and Jibrīl sought to enter. It was said: 'Who are you?' He said: 'Jibrīl.' It was said: 'And who is with you?' He said: 'Muḥammad.' It was said: 'Was he sent for?' He said: 'He was sent for.' So it was opened for us and behold, there was Yūsuf, upon him be peace, and he was given half of beauty. He welcomed me and supplicated good for me.

Then we elevated to the fourth heaven, and Jibrīl sought to enter. It was said: 'Who are you?' He said: 'Jibrīl.' It was said: 'And who is with you?' He said: 'Muḥammad.' It was said: 'Was he sent for?' He said: 'He was sent for.' So it was opened for us and behold, there was Idrīs, upon him be peace. He welcomed me and supplicated good for me. He said: 'Allāh the Mighty and Majestic said:

وَرَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا

And We raised him to a high station.

[Sūrah Maryam, 19:57]

Then we elevated to the fifth heaven, and Jibrīl sought to enter. It was said: 'Who are you?' He said: 'Jibrīl.' It was said: 'And who is with you?' He said: 'Muḥammad.' It was said: 'Was he sent for?' He said: 'He was sent for.' So it was opened for us, and behold, there was Hārūn. He welcomed me and supplicated good for me.

Then we elevated to the sixth heaven, and Jibrīl sought to enter. It was said: 'Who are you?' He said: 'Jibrīl.' It was said: 'And who is with you?' He said: 'Muḥammad.' It was said: 'Was he sent for?' He said: 'He was sent for.' So it was opened for us, and behold, there was Mūsá. He welcomed me and supplicated good for me.

Then we elevated to the seventh heaven, and Jibrīl sought to enter. It was said: 'Who are you?' He said: 'Jibrīl.' It was said: 'And who is with you?' He said: 'Muḥammad.' It was said: 'Was he sent for?' He said: 'He was sent for.' So it was opened for us, and behold, there was Ibrāhīm. He was reclining against Bayt al-Maʿmūr. It is where seventy-thousand angels come every day and they will never return. Then we went to the Sidrah al-Muntahá [Lote Tree of the Uppermost Boundary]. Its leaves are like the ears of elephants, and its fruits are like large earthenware vessels. When the command of Allāh covered it, it underwent a change such that none from the creation of Allāh is able to describe its excellence.

He (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'So Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, revealed to me that which he revealed, and He obligated upon me, in every day and night, fifty prayers. So I descended until I met Mūsá. He said: 'What has your Lord obligated upon your nation?' I said: 'Fifty prayers in every day and night.' He said: 'Return to your Lord and

request Him to lighten it. For indeed, your nation cannot handle that. I tried the Children of Isrāʾīl and am well acquainted with them.'

He (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'So I returned to my Lord, the Mighty and Majestic, and I said: 'My Lord, lighten the affair for my nation.' So he removed five from me. I returned to Mūsá and he asked: 'What happened?' I said: 'He reduced five [prayers] from me.' He said: 'Return to your Lord and request Him to lighten it for your nation.'

He (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'I continued returning [back and forth] between my Lord and Mūsá, and He would reduce from me five at a time until He said: 'O Muḥammad, they are five prayers every day and night, and each prayer is worth ten times its like; so they equal fifty prayers. He who intends a good deed and does not do it, then a good deed is written for him. If he does it then ten good deeds are written for him. He who intends an evil deed but does not do it, then nothing is written. If he does it then one evil deed is written.'

I descended until I reached Mūsá and I informed him of that and he said: 'Return and request your Lord to lighten it for your nation, for they cannot handle that.' The Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) responded: 'I have returned to my Lord to the point that I am ashamed [to return again].'

This narration is one of the narrations of the Ḥadīth, and it is the best and purest of them. Many of the preservers have stated that it is stronger than any others, although it is summarized in some places. Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj reported it in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*,[2] (and its chain is): Shaybān ibn Furrūkh narrated to us saying; Ḥammād ibn Salamah narrated to us saying; Thābit al-Bunānī narrated from Anas ibn Mālik (the Ḥadīth), and its chain of narration is from the chains of narration which the Imams of Ḥadīth have textually mentioned as being the most authentic of chains.

[2] *Muslim* reported it (nos. 162 and 259).

Imam Aḥmad also narrated from ʿAbd al-Razzāq, from Maʿmar, from Qatādah, from Anas ibn Mālik, that the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) was brought al-Burāq on the night when he was taken on the journey. It was saddled for him to ride upon, and it shied from him. Jibrīl said: "What makes you do this? By Allāh, none has ever rode upon you more noble with Allāh the Mighty and Majestic than he." He said: "Then it began to sweat profusely."[3]

Also, with this same chain of narration from Anas, it is narrated that the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said:

> **رفعت لي سدرة المنتهى منتهاها في السماء السابعة نبقها مثل قلال هجر وورقها مثل آذان الفيلة يخرج من ساقها نهران ظاهران ونهران باطنان قلت: يا جبريل ما هذا ؟ قال: الباطنان ففي الجنة وأما الظاهران فالنيل والفرات.**
>
> **I was taken up to the Lote Tree of the Uppermost Boundary [Sidrah al-Muntahā] above the seventh heaven. Its fruits are like earthenware vessels, and its leaves are like the ears of elephants. There were two apparent rivers flowing from its trunk and two hidden rivers. I said: 'O Jibrīl, what are these?' He said: 'As for the two hidden [rivers] they are in Paradise. As for the two apparent [rivers] they are the Nile and the Euphrates.'**[4]

These two are also ṣaḥīḥ Aḥādīth; their narrators are trustworthy and firm Imams.

O people, from that which has come from the ṣaḥīḥ Aḥādīth is that which Imām Ahmad has narrated, as has Imām Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*,[5] by way of Maʿmar, from al-Zuhrī, who said:

> **Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyib informed me, on the authority of Abū Hurayrah,**

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[3] Reported by *Aḥmad* (no. 12261) and *Al-Tirmidhī* (no. 3131). Al-Albānī graded it ṣaḥīh in *Al-Mishkāt* (no. 5920).

[4] Reported by *Aḥmad* (no. 12262); Al-Albānī graded it *ṣaḥīḥ* in *Al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīhah* (no. 112).

[5] Reported by *al-Bukhārī* (no. 3394), *Muslim* (no. 168) and *Aḥmad* (no. 27306).

who said: The Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'When I was taken by night I met Mūsá, upon him be peace.' The Prophet described him as being a man who was slim and had lanky hair, as if he was a man from Shanūʿah. He (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'I met ʿĪsá.' The Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) described him as being of medium stature and red complexioned, as if he had just come from a wash [i.e., a bath]. He (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: "I saw Ibrāhīm, Allāh's blessing be upon him, and I resemble him the most from his offspring. Then I was brought two containers, one of milk and the other contained wine. It was said to me: 'Take whichever of the two you wish.' So I took the milk and drank it. So He said: 'You have been guided to the fitrah. [Or he said: 'You have correctly chosen the fitrah.'] Had you chosen the wine then your ummah would have gone astray.'"

Aḥmad reported,[6] by way of 'Awf al-Aʿrābī, from Zurārah ibn Abū Awfá, from Ibn ʿAbbās, that he said: Allāh's Messenger (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said:

لما كان ليلة أسري بي ، وأصبحت بمكة ، فظعت بأمري ، وعرفت أن الناس مكذبي. فقعد معتزلا حزينا قال: فمر عدو الله أبو جهل فجاء حتى جلس إليه ، فقال له كالمستهزئ: هل كان من شيء؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: نعم قال: ما هو ؟ قال: إنه أسري بي الليلة قال: إلى أين؟ قال: إلى بيت المقدس قال: ثم أصبحت بين ظهرانينا ؟ قال: نعم قال: فلم ير أنه يكذبه مخافة أن يجحده الحديث إذا دعا قومه إليه قال: أرأيت إن دعوت قومك تحدثهم ما حدثتني؟ فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : نعم فقال: هيا معشر بني كعب بن لؤي ، حتي قال: فانتفضت إليه المجالس، وجاءوا حتى جلسوا إليهما ، قال: حدث قومك بما حدثتني ، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إني أسري بي الليلة قالوا: إلى أين؟ قال: إلى بيت المقدس قالوا: ثم أصبحت بين ظهرانينا ؟ ! قال: نعم ، قال: فمن بين مصفق ، ومن بين واضع يده على رأسه، متعجبا للكذب زعم قالوا: وهل تستطيع أن تنعت لنا المسجد ؟ وفي القوم من قد سافر إلى ذلك البلد، ورأى المسجد، فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : فذهبت أنعت ، فما زلت أنعت حتى التبس علي بعض النعت قال: فجيء بالمسجد وأنا أنظر حتى وضع دون

[6] Reported by *Aḥmad* (no. 2815). Al-Albānī graded it ṣaḥīh in *Al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīhah* (no. 3121).

دار عقال أو عقيل فنعته ، وأنا أنظر إليه قال: فقال القوم : أما النعت، فوالله لقد أصاب.

When I was taken on the Night Journey and in the morning I was back at Makkah, I was frightful regarding my affair, and I knew that the people would belie me. So he sat withdrawn and in grief. He said: 'The enemy of Allāh, Abū Jahl passed by; he came and sat close to him and said to him mockingly: 'Is there something [new]?' The Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'Yes.' He said: 'What is it?' He (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'I was taken on a night journey last night.' He said: 'To where?' He (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'To Bayt al-Maqdis.' He said: 'And in the morning you are here amongst us?' He (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'Yes.' So he did not display the fact that he was belying him for fear that he (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) would deny having said the speech when he (i.e., Abū Jahl) called his people. He said: 'What do you think, if I call your people; would you narrate to them that which you have narrated to me?' The Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'Yes.' So he said: 'O assembly of Banū Kaʿb ibn Luʾay.' And a gathering of people gathered around him and came to sit before them. He said: 'Narrate to your people that which you have narrated to me.'

The Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'I was taken on a night journey last night.' They said: 'To where?' He said: 'To Bayt al-Maqdis.' They said: 'And in the morning you are here amongst us?' He said: 'Yes.' Some were in awe and some were putting their hands upon their heads in amazement and denial of the claim. They said: 'Can you describe the masjid to us?' Amongst the people were those who had travelled to that land and had seen the masjid. So the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said: 'So I began describing it. I continued to describe it until some of the descriptions became unclear to me. So the masjid was brought before me, and I was looking at it to the point that a rope or cord would be lost outside of a home and I would describe it while looking at it. So the people said: 'As for the

description, by Allāh, you are correct.'

This, O people, is a ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth; its chain of narration consists of trustworthy and firm men. Ibn Abū Shaybah also narrated it, as did al-Nasāʿī, al-Bazzār, and al-Diyāʾ in *Al-Mukhtārah,* as well as others. There has come, bearing this same meaning, on the authority of Jābir ibn ʿAbdillāh, in a summarized form, that he said: Allāh's Messenger (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said:

«لما كذبتني قريش حين أسري بي إلى بيت المقدس قمت في الحجر فجلا الله لي بيت المقدس فطفقت أخبرهم عن آياته وأنا أنظر إليه.»

"When the Quraysh belied me after I was taken by night to Bayt al-Maqdis, I stood in al-Hijr and Allāh displayed Bayt al-Maqdis before me, and I began informing them of its descriptions whilst I was looking at it."[7]

It was reported by Imām Ahmad, al-Bukhārı, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasāʿī, and al-Tabarī in his *Tafsīr*.

The trustworthy Ḥāfiẓ, Muḥammad ibn Saʿd, said in *Al-Tabaqāt al-Kabīr*:[8]

> Hujayn ibn al-Muthanná informed us saying: 'ʿAbdul-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn Abū Salamah narrated to us from ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Fadl, from Abū Salamah from Abū Hurayrah, that he said that the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) said:
>
> **لقد رأيتني في الحجر ، وقريش تسألني عن مسراي ، فسألوني عن أشياء من بيت المقدس لم أثبتها ، فكربت كربا ما كربت مثله قط ، فرفعه الله لي ، أنظر إليه ، ما يسألوني عن شيء إلا أنبأتهم به ، وقد رأيتني في جماعة من الأنبياء ، فإذا موسى قائم يصلي ، فإذا رجل ضرب جعد ، كأنه من رجال شنوءة ، وإذا عيسى ابن مريم قائم يصلي ، أقرب الناس به شبها عروة بن مسعود الثقفي ، وإذا إبراهيم قائم يصلي أشبه الناس به صاحبكم ، يعني نفسه ، فحانت**

[7] Reported by *al-Bukhārī* (no. 3886) and *Muslim* (no. 170).

[8] Reported by Ibn Saʿd in *Al-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā,* 1/215.

الصلاة فأممتهم ، فلما فرغت من الصلاة قال لي قائل : يا محمد هذا مالك صاحب النار ، فسلم عليه ، فالتفت إليه فبدأني بالسلام.

I saw myself in al-Hijr, and the Quraysh were questioning me about my Night Journey. They asked me about things from Bayt al-Maqdis which I was uncertain about. So I felt a distress which I had never felt before. Then Allāh raised it before me, and I was looking at it. They did not ask me about anything except that I informed them about it. I saw myself amongst a group of the prophets. Behold, there was Mūsá standing and praying. He was a slim man with curly hair, as if he was from the men of Shanūʿah. Behold, there was ʿĪsá ibn Maryam standing and praying. The nearest of the people to him in appearance is 'Urwah ibn Masʿūd al-Thaqafī. Behold, there was Ibrāhīm standing and praying. The closest of the people to him in resemblance is your companion [i.e., himself]. I began to pray and lead them. When I completed the prayer someone said to me: 'O Muḥammad, this is Mālik, the guardian of the Hellfire. Greet him with salām.' I looked towards him and he initiated the salām to me.'

This Ḥadīth is also ṣaḥīh and is established. Muslim reported it in his *Ṣaḥīh*,[9] on the authority of Zuhayr ibn Harb, from Hujayn ibn al-Muthanná, the shaykh of Ibn Saʿd.

This is a small portion of the large number (of Aḥādīth) that has come from the authentic reports regarding al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj. All of them indicate, explicitly and clearly, that al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj occurred to his noble person (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam), meaning to his body and soul. The one who hears them does not understand other than that.

[9] Reported by *Muslim* (no. 278).

4 The Ḥadīth of al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Is from the Authentic and Established Aḥādīth

The View That al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Occurred only to the Soul of the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) or That It Was a Dream

Some of the people of false interpretations, from those of previous times and those of latter times, have dared to interpret all of the texts and understand from them that al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj occurred to his (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) soul only. Some of them claimed that it was a dream. There is not to be found, for either of these two groups, reliable evidence for these (interpretations) that nullify the apparent meaning and what is explicitly stated and what is actually indicated (semantically) in the language. For interpretation is a type of metaphor which is not resorted to in speech except with evidence or something clearly stating (that it is a metaphor).

Yes, perhaps you will find two Aḥādīth from ʿĀʿishah and Muʿāwiyah which give the understanding that al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj did not occur to his noble body. They are two Aḥādīth the like of which are not used as evidence by those who have knowledge of Ḥadīth. Ibn Ishāq narrated them in *Al-Sīrah*. He said: "Some of the family of Abū Bakr narrated to me that ʿĀʿishah used to say: 'The body of the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) was not absent. However, Allāh took his soul by night.'"

He said: "Yaʿqūb ibn ʿUtbah ibn al-Mughīrah ibn al-Akhnas narrated to me that whenever Muʿāwiyah ibn Abū Sufyān was asked about the Night Journey of the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) he would say: 'It was a true dream from Allāh.'"

Ibn Ishāq said, commenting upon that (the statements of ʿĀʿishah and Muʿāwiyah):

5 The View That al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Occurred Only to the Soul of the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) or That It Was a Dream

That cannot be rejected from their statements, due to the statement of al-Ḥasan: 'This verse was revealed regarding that' meaning, the statement of Allāh the Exalted:

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ

And We made not the vision which We showed you [O Muḥammad] but a trial for mankind.

[Sūrah al-Isrāʾ, 17:60]

Also, due to the statement of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, reporting about Ibrāhīm, upon him be peace:

يَا بُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرَى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ

O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you.

[Sūrah al-Saffat, 37:102]

Upon this I came to know that the revelation from Allāh comes to the prophets while in a state of wakefulness and while asleep. In that which has reached me, the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) used to say:

تنام عيني وقلبي يقظان

'My eyes sleep, but my heart is fully awake.'[1]

So Allāh knows best which of that [sleep or wakefulness] occurred to him. He witnessed therein that which he witnessed from the command of Allāh, in whichever of the two states he was in: sleep or wakefulness. All of that is true and correct.

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[1] *Al-Bukhārī* reported it (no. 3569) from the Ḥadīth of ʿĀʿishah (raḍī Allāhu ʿanhā). Aḥmad reported it (no. 9366) from the Ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah (raḍī Allāhu ʿanhu) with the wording:

«تنام عيني وقلبي لا ينام.»

"My eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep."

This is the speech of Ibn Ishāq which Ibn Hishām transmitted from him in *Tahdhīb Sīrah*. It is apparent that when Ibn Ishāq saw the two statements of ʿĀʿishah and Muʿāwiyah, he was undecided as to whether he [the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)] was awake or asleep. However, he was also uncertain about negating what the reports indicated—that it took place while he was awake, having witnessed it in his body and soul (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam).

O people, the statement of Ibn Ishāq and his using as evidence the two reports of ʿĀʿishah and Muʿāwiyah—in my view—is the first instance of differing regarding the issue which has been transmitted from the scholars of the past. Thereafter, there came those who spoke with certainty regarding that which Ibn Ishāq was uncertain about.

Ibn Ishāq's use of these two reports as evidence is not proper, for they are two weak reports which have no authentic chain of narration. I have done extensive research regarding them, and I did not find a chain of narration for them other than what Ibn Ishāq mentioned.

As for the report of Muʿāwiyah, it is munqatiʿ (disconnected) because its narrator, Yaʿqūb ibn ʿUtbah ibn al-Mughīrah ibn al-Akhnas, did not meet Muʿāwiyah nor did he meet any of the Companions at all. He only narrated from the Tābiʿūn, and he died in the year 128 H, whereas Muʿāwiyah died in the year 60 H.

As for the Ḥadīth of ʿĀʿishah, as you have seen, it has no chain of narration because the statement of Ibn Ishāq, "Some of the family of Abū Bakr narrated to me...," is unclear as to who the narrator is. So we do not know who narrated to him. Is he trustworthy or not? Did he (actually) meet ʿĀʿishah or not? So both of these Aḥādīth are disconnected in the chain and have unknown narrators. The like of this is not used as evidence, according to the people of knowledge.

5 The View That al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Occurred Only to the Soul of the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) or That It Was a Dream

Al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Occurred to Both the Body and Soul of the Messenger (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)

Imām Abū Jaʿfar ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī transmitted in his *Tafsīr*, the statement of Ibn Ishāq, and then he refuted it with a most eloquent refutation. He said:

> That which is correct regarding that [Ibn Ishāq's statement], according to us, is that it be said: Allāh took His slave Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) by night from Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, just as Allāh has informed His slaves, and as the reports from the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) apparently mention—that Allāh carried him upon al-Burāq until he brought him to it, and there he led in prayer those whom he led from the prophets and messengers, and He showed him signs. There is no validity to the statement of he who says that he was taken by his soul and not his body. This is because if this was the case [that it was a dream], then it would not contain anything which necessitates proof of his prophethood, and it would not be a proof for him being sent as a messenger. There would be no motivation for those from the people of shirk who denied it being a reality to reject his truthfulness in it, and there would not be anything to prevent anyone who has a sound fitrah, from the children of Ādam, to deny that one can see a vision, in a dream, of himself travelling the distance of a year's journey. So how about that which contains a month's journey or less than that?
>
> Moreover, Allāh has informed us in His Book that He took His servant by night. He did not inform us that He took the soul of His servant by night. It is not permissible for one to take what Allāh has said to mean other than what it is. There is no indication from His statement: **'...took His servant by night...'** that He took the soul of His servant. Rather, the

> clear evidences and successive reports from the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) indicate that Allāh took His servant by night upon an animal called al-Burāq. Had al-Isrāʾ been with his soul, then the soul could not be carried upon al-Burāq. For animals only carry things which have structure [i.e., bodies]. Unless one were to say: The meaning of our statement that He took his soul by night is that he saw in a dream that his body was being carried upon al-Burāq, in which case he is belying the meaning of the reports which have been narrated from the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)—that Jibrīl carried him upon al-Burāq. If that was a dream, based upon the statement of the one who says this, and he believes that the soul is not from that which can ride an animal, yet the body of the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) was carried upon al-Burāq, then based upon his statement, the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) was not even carried upon al-Burāq [at all]; not his body; not any part of him!! The affair, according to him, is just like some of the dreams of those who sleep, and that is in opposition to the apparent meaning of the revelation and what the reports from the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) affirm and what has come in the narrations from the Scholars, the Companions and the Tābiʿūn.

O people, this is what al-Tabarī said in refutation of Ibn Ishāq. You have seen the weakness in his argument from that which he (Ibn Ishāq) narrated from ʿĀʿishah and Muʿāwiyah. There has come, on the authority of ʿĀʿishah, that which opposes the narration of Ibn Ishāq. Al-Ḥākim reported in *Al-Mustadrak*, by way of Ibrāhīm ibn al-Haytham al-Baldī, from Muḥammad ibn Kathīr al-Ṣanʿānī, from Maʿmar, from al-Zuhrī, from ʿUrwah, from ʿĀʿishah, that she said:

> When the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) was taken by night to al-Masjid al-Aqṣá, the people began to speak about that, and a group of those who had faith in him and believed in him became apostates. They went to Abū Bakr and said: 'Do you know about your companion? He claims that last night he was taken on a journey to Bayt al-Maqdis.' He

> [Abū Bakr] said: 'Did he say that?' They said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Then if he said it he has spoken the truth.' They said: 'So you believe that he went last night to Bayt al-Maqdis and returned before the morning?' He said: 'Yes. I believe him in that which is more amazing than that. I believe him in that because he receives information from the heavens in the mornings and evenings.' Due to that Abū Bakr was called 'al-Siddīq'.[1]

In al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr's transmission, al-Bayhaqī narrated it from al-Ḥākim. Ibn Athīr also narrated it in *Asad al-Ghābah*, with its chain by way of al-Mufaddal ibn Ghassān, from Muḥammad ibn Kathīr al-Ṣanʿānī. This chain of narration is ṣaḥīḥ. Al-Ḥākim declared it ṣaḥīḥ and al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī concurred. It nullifies the narration of Ibn Ishāq, the chain of which is unknown. This is because ʿĀʿishah (raḍi Allāhu ʿanhā) narrated that from the effects of the report regarding al-Isrāʾ is that it was denied by whoever denied it and those who became apostates, and that her father, al-Siddīq (raḍi Allāhu ʿanhu) affirmed the report and clarified his reason for affirming it. If she held that this (Night Journey) was with his soul or that it was a dream, then it would have been of no importance to her who believed or denied it, and there would not be fitnah for the one who was uncertain to be tested with. For there is nothing strange regarding what the sleeping person sees (i.e., in his dream).

The Arabs used to believe what the fortune-tellers informed them of regarding what was hidden from their sights. So they would not deny a man telling them about a spiritual trip, which was easier to imagine, if they had understood from his speech that he was taken by night with his soul then elevated to the heavens. The only clear understanding is that they denied what he told them due to something which they deemed to be outside of human capabilities and something which a person is unable to do with his body, mind and soul, all at the same time.

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[1] Al-Hākim reported it on *Al-Mustadrak*, 3/65, and al-Albānī graded it *ṣaḥīḥ* in *Al-Silsilah Al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 306).

6 Al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Occurred to Both the Body and Soul of the Messenger (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)

Some of the Early and Some of the Contemporary Researchers Dared to Have Certainty in What Ibn Ishāq Was Uncertain About

Gentlemen, some of the researchers, from previous times and latter times, are certain of what Ibn Ishāq was uncertain about. They claimed that al-Isrāʾ occurred to the soul or that it was in a dream, and they paid no attention to the fact that if what they claimed had been correct, then Allāh the Glorified, would not have made it a sign of Prophethood for His Prophet, and He would not have praised Himself for this amazing miracle. He said:

سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

Glorified [and Exalted] be He [Allāh] Who took His slave [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)] for a journey by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām [at Makkah] to the farthest mosque [in Jerusalem], the neighbourhood whereof We have blessed, in order that We might show him [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)] of Our Āyāt [proofs, evidences, lessons, signs, etc.]. Verily, He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

[Sūrah al-Isrāʾ, 17:1]

From what is strange, is that they use as proof that which he transmitted without a chain of narration from ʿĀʿishah, and they erred in their transmitting what was (itself) an error, and thus it nullifies their argument. For the narration of Ibn Ishāq from her reads:

ما فُقِدَ جسد رسول الله

7 Some of the Early and Some of the Contemporary Researchers Dared to Have Certainty in What Ibn Ishāq Was Uncertain About

"The body of the Messenger of Allāh was not absent."

Thus, (the verb) is in the passive form. They transmitted it as:

ما فقدتُ جسد رسول الله

"I was not absent from the body of the Messenger of Allāh."

So their proof carries the hammer which demolishes it. This is because what is authentically established is that the Night Journey was on the 17th night of the month of Rabīᶜ al-Awwal, before the Hijrah by one year, and ᶜĀᶜishah was not, at that time, more than seven years old, and she was not in the home of the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam). For he did not bring her in except in al-Madīnah after the Hijrah. So it does not make sense for one to report from her tongue that she said: "I was not absent from the body of the Messenger of Allāh."

The Statement That al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Was a Dream Is Based on a Mistake in Transmission

O people, some of the authors have transmitted from al-Ḥasan ibn Abū al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī the statement that the Night Journey was a dream. This transmission is also an error. For this statement had not been narrated from him with a chain of narration. What is apparent to me is that those who transmitted this statement from him read the speech of Ibn Ishāq and understood it incorrectly. This is because he (Ibn Ishāq) transmitted the two narrations of ʿĀʿishah and Muʿāwiyah, then used as supporting evidence the fact that none criticized them. Al-Ḥasan said that the statement of Allāh, the Exalted:

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ

And We made not the vision which we showed you but a trial for mankind.

[Sūrah al-Isrāʾ, 17:60]

...was revealed concerning that—meaning, al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj. He intended to argue on the basis of the word: (al-ruʾyā) الرُّؤْيَا (vision), due to the majority of times it is used to denote a dream, and that since the verse was revealed regarding this incident, then that does not negate the statement of he who claims that al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj was not in a state of wakefulness. So some of those who read his (Ibn Ishāq's) statement understood that he was transmitting from al-Ḥasan that which corresponded with the statements of ʿĀʿishah and Muʿāwiyah. This is an errant understanding; its error is clear to the one who contemplates upon the context of the speech and its meaning.

The statement of Allāh, the Exalted:

8 The Statement That al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Was a Dream Is Based on a Mistake in Transmission

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ

And We made not the vision which we showed you but a trial for mankind.
[Sūrah al-Isrāʾ, 17:60]

...this was revealed regarding al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj, based upon the stronger statement amongst the scholars. However, Ibn Ishāq's use of that as evidence to support the statements of ʿĀʿishah and Muʿāwiyah is not proper because **al-ruʾyā** is also used regarding that which one sees with the eye.

In *Lisān al-ʿArab,* there reads: Ibn Barrī said:

> Al-Ruʾyā came in a state of wakefulness. A poet said:
>
> فكبر للرؤيا وهش فؤاده وبشر نفسا كان قبل يلومها
>
> *He Magnified Allāh due to the vision and his displayed joy*
> *The soul which he used to censure received glad tidings;*
>
> On this basis the statement of Allāh the Exalted, is explained:
>
> وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الرُّؤْيَا الَّتِي أَرَيْنَاكَ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِّلنَّاسِ
>
> **And We made not the vision which we showed you but a trial for mankind.**
> [Sūrah al-Isrāʾ, 17:60]
>
> And upon this, there is the statement of Abū al-Tayyib: 'Your vision is too sweet in the eyes to blink...'

Imām Aḥmad, al-Bukhārī and others[1] narrated on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, in explanation of this verse: "It is the vision of the eye which the Messenger of Allāh (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) was shown on the night he was taken to Bayt al-

[1] *Al-Bukhārī* reported it (no. 3888), as did *Aḥmad* (no. 3536).

Maqdis, and it was not a dream."

In another wording:[2] "It is something which the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) was shown in a state of wakefulness. He saw it with his eyes when he went to Bayt al-Maqdis."

There is no text more explicit than this nor stronger than it in terms of evidence. This is because Ibn ʿAbbās, who was the interpreter of the Qurʿān, was explaining therein the verse, and he was narrating that the Night Journey was in a state of wakefulness. He was transmitting—being a Hashimī, Qurayshī, Arab who was eloquent in speech—that the word al-ruʾyā, which is in the language of the Qurʿān, means vision (i.e., something seen).

[2] Reported by *Aḥmad* (no. 3490).

8 The Statement That al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj Was a Dream Is Based on a Mistake in Transmission

The World Is Not Restricted to That Which Is Within the Scope of Human Comprehension

O people, the world is not restricted to that which is within human perception only. He who claims that has (attempted to) restrict the ability of Allāh. Rather, he has not believed in Him! Due to this, Allāh has described the muttaqūn as those:

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ

Who believe in the ghayb [the unseen]...

[Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:3]

Meaning, they believe in what the prophets have informed them of—from that which goes outside of what humans can grasp with their limited capabilities—and what Allāh the Glorified, has explicitly informed us of in His Book. That:

أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى

He took His slave [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] for a journey by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām [at Makkah] to the farthest mosque [in Jerusalem].

[Sūrah al-Isrāʾ, 17:1]

The Messenger (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) informed us that he ascended to the heavens, and Allāh the Glorified has indicated that in the Qurʾān. Read the statement of Allāh the Exalted:

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ﴿١﴾ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ﴿٢﴾ وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٣﴾ إِنْ هُوَ
إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٧﴾

9 The World Is Not Restricted to That Which Is Within the Scope of Human Comprehension

ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ ﴿٨﴾ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ مَا كَذَبَ
الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ﴿١١﴾ أَفَتُمَارُونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا يَرَىٰ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾ عِندَ سِدْرَةِ
الْمُنتَهَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ عِندَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا
طَغَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ لَقَدْ رَأَىٰ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾

By the star when it goes down, [or vanishes]. Your companion [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] has neither gone astray nor erred. Nor does he speak of [his own] desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired. He has been taught [this Qurʾān] by one mighty in power [i.e., Jibrīl]. Dhū Mirrah [free from any defect in body and mind], fastawa [then he (Jibrīl) rose and became stable] (*Tafsir al-Tabarī*). While he [Jibrīl] was in the highest part of the horizon. Then he [Jibrīl] approached and came closer, and was at a distance of two bows' length or [even] nearer. So did [Allāh] convey the Inspiration to His slave [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) through Jibrīl]. The [Prophet's] heart lied not [in seeing] what he [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] saw. Will you then dispute with him [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] about what he saw [during the miᶜrāj [ascent of the Prophet (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) over the seven heavens)]? And indeed, he (Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) saw him [Jibrīl] at a second descent [i.e., another time]. Near Sidrah al-Muntahá [lote-tree of the utmost boundary (beyond which none can pass)]. Near it is the Paradise of Abode. When that covered the lote-tree which did cover it! The sight [of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] turned not aside [right or left], nor did it transgress beyond [the] limit [ordained for it]. Indeed he [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam)] did see of the Greatest Signs of his Lord [Allāh].

[Sūrah al-Najm, 53:1-18]

So the believer who believes in the unseen, has no option other than to believe in that which Allāh and His Messenger (ṣalla Allāhu ᶜalayhi wa sallam) have informed us of, even if his intellect is unable to grasp the reality of what he believes in. He relegates its knowledge to the One who has knowledge of it, similar to the

situation regarding the mutashābih[1] from the Qurʾān. Allāh, the Exalted, says:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُّحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِندِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

It is He Who has sent down to you [Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)] the Book [this Qurʾān]. In it are Verses that are entirely clear; they are the foundations of the Book [and those are the Verses of al-aḥkam (commandments, etc.), al-farāʿid (obligatory duties) and al-ḥudūd (legal laws for the punishment of thieves, adulterers, etc.)] and others not entirely clear. So as for those in whose hearts there is a deviation [from the truth] they follow that which is not entirely clear thereof, seeking al-fitnah [polytheism and trials, etc.], and seeking for its hidden meanings, but none knows its hidden meanings save Allāh. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: 'We believe in it; the whole of it [clear and unclear Verses] are from our Lord.' And none receive admonition except men of understanding. (*Tafsir al-Tabari*).

[Sūrah Āli ʿImrān, 3:7]

So he who tries to interpret Allāh's signs with which He supported His prophets, does nothing more than deny them while thinking that he is hiding his denial.

O people, those from times past who claimed that al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj occurred to the soul or in a dream only claimed that using as evidence the reports which they saw regarding it. I have already clarified for you that they are reports which are weak and to rely upon them is an error.

As for those who claim that from the contemporaries, they have claimed that our Prophet Muḥammad (ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam) had no miracles other than the Qurʾān, and they reject all of the successively narrated reports regarding the miracles (al-muʾjizāt). They think that al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj negate that which is

[1] Unclear verses which must be referred back to that which is muḥkam (clear and decisive).

referred to commonly in this era as science, because science does not affirm the human capability of a body being transported in this fashion as has been reported in the Ḥadīth of al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj. I am not, at this time, going to delve into what science affirms or negates. However, I ask you, do you believe in what Allāh has reported in the Qurʾān from the story of Sulaymān with the Queen of Sabaʾ? Allāh the Glorified has informed us of the correspondence which occurred between her and Sulaymān. Then He, the Most High, said:

قَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأُ أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَن يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ
الْجِنِّ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن تَقُومَ مِن مَّقَامِكَ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ الَّذِي عِندَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ
الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَن يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ فَلَمَّا رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِندَهُ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِن فَضْلِ
رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي أَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ وَمَن شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ
كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

He said: 'O chiefs! Which of you can bring me her throne before they come to me surrendering themselves in obedience?' An ʿifrīt [strong] from the jinns said: 'I will bring it to you before you rise from your place [council]. And verily, I am indeed strong and trustworthy for such work.' One with whom was knowledge of the Scripture said: 'I will bring it to you within the twinkling of an eye!' Then when Sulaymān saw it placed before him, he said: 'This is by the Grace of my Lord to test whether I am grateful or ungrateful! And whoever is grateful, truly, his gratitude is for [the good of] his own self, and whoever is ungrateful, [he is ungrateful only for the loss of his own self]. Certainly! My Lord is Rich [Free of all wants], Bountiful."

[Sūrah al-Naml, 27:38–40]

This is an incident which cannot be interpreted. In it, a man from the companions of Sulaymān had the ability, due to what Allāh had taught him from the Book, to transport the throne of the Queen, from Yemen to Shām, in the twinkling of an eye. Every Muslim who affirms the Qurʾān believes in its authenticity. It is from the same category as al-Isrāʾ wa-al-Miʿrāj in terms of the transporting of bodies. So

what do you call those who believe in some of the verses and deny others?

9 The World Is Not Restricted to That Which Is Within the Scope of Human Comprehension

The Tyranny of Atheism upon Europe and Its Effect upon Islām and the Muslims

O people, the ideology of atheism crept into Europe and its people fell into the worship of material things, after having been in darkness because of ignorance in their religion and their worldly life, to the point that they refer to the past ages in their history—the Middle Ages—as being the Dark Ages. Then they came to control the means of manufacturing in what was facilitated for them from the good things of the dunyā and its adornments, while the Islamic nation was abandoned by its people and weakness and degeneracy crept into it because of what they had left off from their religion and what they had forgotten from its nobility. However, Europe did not forget its defeat by the Muslims during the Crusades, and they seized this opportunity and waged war upon the Muslim lands, with the sword and with material things. The minds of our youth were engrossed in the worldly sciences, and the sciences of the religion were removed from them. They were shackled, in terms of their creed being removed from their hearts, due to the disbelievers' authority over the cultivation of the children of the Muslims, their control of governmental affairs, and their monopoly over the means of earnings.

They (the Muslims) became weak because of the need to earn a living. So at their (i.e., the disbelievers) hands they produced (Muslim) men whose souls refused to submit to many of the Islamic beliefs and to what has come in the Book and the Sunnah. They reject some of the legislations of Islām, specifically the prescribed punishments, ribā, the ḥijāb of the women, marriage, divorce, inheritance and endowments, while being certain that they are Muslims (upon the truth). Their hearts and souls are not pleased that they should plunge into the abyss of apostasy from Islām. Nonetheless, you see within them a deviant psychological state and a strange (type of) spiritual confusion from which there is no removal for them (from it) nor is there any salvation.

Intellectual arrogance prevents them from letting their minds submit to that which opposes what their teachers have instilled within them, step by step. So they do not find (anything) which will convince them or please their souls, except that they misinterpret that which opposes their opinions from the texts of the Qurʿān and their (the texts) apparent meanings, whether there is room for interpretation or not. As it relates to the Sunnah, their state is amazing. From them there is he who rejects it outright and wants to convince the people, while he is not convinced himself, that all of the narrators are liars and all of the Aḥādīth are fabricated. From them, there are those who distort the meaning of what they are able to, then reject the rest.

O people, from the effects of these teachings and from the results of this confusion within all of those learning is what you see from zeal for (so called) religious reform, as they claim, and what you see from the attempt to reject the existence of the angels and the jinn and to distort the meanings of the texts which have come regarding that, and what you see from the attempt to reject the supernatural occurrences which Allāh the Glorified has made to be miracles with which He aided his prophets and messengers (which He sent) to the people by way of interpreting them to be that which takes them outside of being miraculous and placing them within human capabilities. Likewise, from the effects of these teachings and the confusion it creates is rejecting every miracle with which Allāh supported our prophet, Muḥammad—and which are widely known by the Muslims by way of being successively reported on each level (of transmission) with that which leaves no room for doubt or uncertainty, much less outright denial—and allowing the intellect to be the deciding factor, as they claim.

The Innovation of Distorting the Texts of the Qur'ān to Coincide With What They Call Sound Knowledge or Science

O people, an evil innovation has spread in this time—the innovation of distorting the meaning of the texts of the Qur'ān so that they can be in agreement with what they call sound knowledge or science, in order to draw near to the proponents of this science or to appease their Orientalist professors, and they (i.e., Orientalists) are vanguards for the missionaries.

It is the same to them if these theories are affirmed with certainty, or if they are from conjecture which they assume to be knowledge. They deem them (i.e., these theories) to be stronger because there is no other view stronger than them. What these false interpreters care about is that the people refer to them as revivalists. There is no Might nor Power except with Allāh.

11 The Innovation of Distorting the Texts of the Qur'ān to Coincide With What They Call Sound Knowledge or Science

Closing

O people, I have spoken at length, and I feel that I have bored you. The field of study is one which is extensive. I feel that you have been gracious by listening to me, and I ask Allāh to forgive me and you.

Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir